3.11 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and Wild and Scenic River Eligibility

1.1.1 3.11.1 ACECs

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) are those areas managed for specific and substantial unique resource values. Areas with the potential for ACEC designation, protection, and management are identified through the BLM's resource management planning process.

The Quitchupah Creek – Trough Hollow ACEC has been nominated under the current land use planning effort for the BLM's Richfield Field Office. The ACEC would include Quitchupah Creek drainage, Link Canyon, and Trough Hollow, and would involve the majority of the EIS Project Area, excepting the Water Hollow & Saleratus benches. Under the ACEC nomination process, when both criteria (relevance and importance) are met, the area is a potential ACEC to be reviewed in the Draft RFP. The nominated ACEC met the criteria of relevance due to significant evidence of prehistoric occupation and use. The importance criterion is satisfied by significance of the cultural sites and their sensitivity to development and access. Other values include bald eagle habitat and presence of BLM sensitive Creutzfeldt flower and Federally listed last chance Townsendia.

The cultural values for the canyon are the many documented Fremont and Archaic habitation sites and use areas as well as the more recent historic activity.

This area overlaps the Old Woman Plateau that includes the Old Woman Cove RNA, found relevant and important for relict value. The Forest Service designates and manages a network of special areas on Forest lands that are permanently protected and maintained in natural conditions, for the purposes of conserving biological diversity, conducting non-manipulative research and monitoring, and fostering education. RNAs include: high quality examples of widespread ecosystems, unique ecosystems or ecological features, and/or rare or sensitive species of plants and animals and their habitat. The Old Woman Cove RNA is not within the proposed Project Area.

Potential Impacts To ACEC's

NO ACTION - ALTERNATIVE A

There would be no impacts to the proposed Quitchupah Creek – Trough Hollow ACEC under the No Action Alternative. Current impacts (erosion, grazing, etc.) to these values would continue.

QUITCHUPAH CREEK ROAD ALIGNMENT - ALTERNATIVE B

Alternative B would negatively impact six eligible cultural resource sites (See **Section 3.12**) through archaeological excavation and destruction due to construction of the proposed road. This would impact the values for which the ACEC was nominated in Quitchupah Creek drainage. However, current impacts to these values would be lessened through erosion control, livestock trail and fencing, and other management.

ALTERNATE JUNCTION AND ALTERNATE DESIGN - ALTERNATIVE C

Alternative C would negatively impact ten eligible cultural resource sites (See **Section 3.12**) through archaeological excavation and destruction due to construction of the proposed road. This would impact the values for which the ACEC was nominated in both Quitchupah Creek drainage and Link Canyon. However, current impacts to these values would be lessened through erosion control, livestock trail and fencing, and other management.

WATER HOLLOW ALTERNATE ALIGNMENT - ALTERNATIVE D
Under Alternative D, the proposed road would avoid the eligible cultural resource sites in the Quitchupah Creek drainage and Link Canyon. It would not compromise the values for which the ACEC was nominated. Further, current impacts to these values would be lessened through erosion control, livestock trail and fencing, and other management.

1.1.2 3.11.2 Wild and Scenic River Eligibility

Quitchupah Creek, from the Fishlake National Forest boundary to the Sevier/Emery county line (crossing 1.4 miles of BLM land) was found to be eligible for possible designation as a wild and scenic river during the initial phase of Richfield BLM's land use planning update process. The March 2005 Wild and Scenic River Eligibility and Tentative Classification Report determined that the river was eligible for its outstandingly remarkable cultural resource value. It was tentatively classified as a recreational river. Once a river segment crossing public lands has been determined as eligible, the river corridor is managed to protect the outstandingly remarkable values for which it is nominated, until a suitability determination is made.

Potential Impacts To Wild And Scenic River Eligibility
NO ACTION - ALTERNATIVE A
There would be no impacts to the eligible values of the nominated Scenic River segment under the No Action Alternative. Current impacts (erosion, grazing, etc.) to these values would continue.

QUITCHUPAH CREEK ROAD ALIGNMENT - ALTERNATIVE B
Alternative B would impact six eligible cultural resource sites (see **Section 3.12**) through mitigative archaeological excavation and subsequent destruction due to construction of the proposed road. This would impact the eligible values for which the Scenic River segment was nominated in Quitchupah Creek drainage. However, current impacts to these values would be lessened through erosion control, livestock trail and fencing, and other management.

ALTERNATE JUNCTION AND ALTERNATE DESIGN - ALTERNATIVE C
Alternative C would impact five eligible cultural resource sites through mitigative archaeological excavation and subsequent destruction due to construction of the proposed road. This would impact the eligible values for which the Scenic River segment was nominated in Quitchupah Creek drainage. However, current impacts to these values would be lessened through erosion control, livestock trail and fencing, and other management.

WATER HOLLOW ALTERNATE ALIGNMENT - ALTERNATIVE D

Under Alternative D, the proposed road would avoid the eligible cultural resource sites in the Quitchupah Creek drainage. It would not compromise the eligible values for which the Scenic River segment was nominated. Further, current impacts to these values would be lessened through erosion control, livestock trail and fencing, and other management.